

Fall 1950

QUARTERLY

News-Letter

VOLUME XV

NUMBER 4

John Hamilton Still

By Hazel N. Chambers

UCLA Special Collections

By Neal Harlow

The William Doxey Bookshop

By Flodden W. Heron

Reading in the Gold Rush

By Gerard Hurley

Elected to Membership

News of Publications

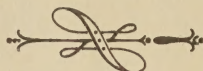
Miscellany

Gifts to the Library



*Published for its members by The Book Club
of California, 549 Market Street,
San Francisco*

The Book Club of California



FOUNDED IN 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of booklovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to seven hundred and fifty members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$12.00. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current keepsake series, *Bonanza Banquets*. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

Officers & Directors

GEORGE L. HARDING, *President*

OSCAR LEWIS, *Vice President*

CARROLL T. HARRIS, *Treasurer*

FLODDEN W. HERON, *Honorary*

MISS EDITH M. COULTER, *Chairman, Publication Committee*

ALBERT SPERISEN, *Chairman, Keepsake & Exhibit Committees*

MRS. JOHN I. WALTER, *Chairman, Membership Committee*

T. M. LILIENTHAL, *Chairman, House and Library Committee*

LEWIS ALLEN

MORGAN A. GUNST

JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON

ROBERT J. WOODS

HOWARD WILLOUGHBY

MRS. ELIZABETH DOWNS, *Secretary*

News-Letter Editorial Committee

LEWIS ALLEN

H. RICHARD ARCHER

JACKSON BURKE

JAMES D. HART

ALLEN BERGERON

FLORENCE S. CHESSE

Subscription to the *Quarterly News-Letter* is included in the dues. Extra copies, when available, are sold to members at 50c each.



John Hamilton Still

San Francisco's First Bookseller

BY HAZEL N. CHAMBERS*

CALIFORNIA's pioneer bookseller, twenty-one-year-old John Hamilton Still, arrived in San Francisco on September 16, 1849, aboard the ship *Griffen*. As if to make up for the enforced inactivity of the 180-day voyage around the Horn from New York, John Still fell to almost immediately, and before the month was out, he had opened his first bookstore on Pike Street, now Waverly Place.

He was born in Nassau, West Indies, on November 26, 1827, about one month after the death of his father, John Still Sr. The elder Still had left his father's Aberdeen, Scotland, estate eight years previously to begin his business career in the office of a West Indies commission merchant. John Hamilton's mother was Sarah C. Hall, daughter of the Rev. James Hamilton Hall and granddaughter of Teckla Hamilton Hall, a direct descendant

*Mrs. William Ely Chambers is the granddaughter of John Hamilton Still, whose biography she is now completing and which will be published under the title *Still Alive*.

The Book Club of California

of the Hamiltons of Hamilton Palace, Lanarkshire, Scotland. When he was thirteen years old, John Hamilton Still enlisted in the United States Navy and completed a seven-year hitch. A few months after his discharge, he sailed for San Francisco to establish himself as the territory's pioneer bookseller.

Shortly after the opening of the Pike Street store—before the end of the year, in fact—he moved to a new location in Portsmouth Square where he increased his staff by the addition of three clerks. In January of 1850, he took in Elias Thomas as partner. By late Spring, the firm, now known as Still & Thomas, had moved their bookstore again, locating this time in the Alta California Building. The move proved to be an unlucky one however, for the building was destroyed by fire within a few weeks and the partnership dissolved.

Still's determination to sell books continued firm despite this setback; and, in the San Francisco *Daily Alta*, May 6, 1850, he advertised: "Still Alive at No. 6 Pine Street, a few doors below the Post Office, subscriber having been burnt out at late fire, Alta California Building, loss \$1200." The day after the ad appeared, a new partnership was formed in the names of John H. Still and John W. Conner and their store was moved to the St. Francis Hotel, corner Clay and Dupont Streets.

On August 1, 1850, Still, having taken in yet another partner, James O. Forrest, opened the first bookstore in Sacramento, an occasion marked by the Sacramento *Transcript* as follows: "We are happy to learn that Sacramento is at last to be supplied with a bookstore, which will contain such a general assortment of goods as our city has long stood in need of. The enterprising firm of Still, Conner & Company open their store this morning in the room on the first floor of the *Placer Times* office, Second Street, between K and L."

The new firm's first paid ad appeared in the Sacramento *Transcript* on August 3, 1850: "The undersigned have associated themselves together for the purpose of transacting a wholesale and retail newspaper, book, and stationery business in San Francisco, corner Clay and Dupont Sts., and at Sacramento City in the Placer Times Building.

John H. Still
John W. Conner
James O. Forrest."

Quarterly News-Letter

Still traded as briskly in partnerships as he did in books, and this one was no exception. By the end of October 1850, the firm had been dissolved and John Hamilton returned to San Francisco, leaving the Sacramento business to Forrest & Conner. The San Francisco store was moved back to Portsmouth Square at Brennan Place; and, with the acquisition of two new partners, the firm of Burgess, Gilbert & Still was formed.

During the next three years, the business prospered: new quarters were found at 126 Commercial Street; and, in February of 1853, Burgess, Gilbert & Still became the publishers of a new monthly magazine, *The Illustrated California Carpet Bag*. In the Spring of that year, Still, who had saved his money and built a house, wrote his mother, "I am very fond of good female society, and I think a nice little wife 'just suited to my mind' would be a useful and convenient article to have about my house." By now an old hand at forming partnerships, he inquired accordingly and learned from a school teacher friend of his that she had two pretty sisters living in Philadelphia, either of whom would make a "useful and convenient article" for his house. He went East promptly, married sister Jane, and returned to San Francisco in August 1853 to find that the business had gone to pot.

Gilbert, then running for the State Assembly, had neglected the business and concentrated most of his attention on the campaign. As a result, the firm of Burgess, Gilbert & Still was dissolved on September 19, 1853, and a new partnership formed—Gilbert & Still. Gilbert's interest in affairs of state continued to outweigh his interest in the affairs of the store however, and, on November 9, 1853, this partnership was dissolved. John H. Still then moved his store to the Armory Hall Building at 128 Montgomery Street, where he struggled along until February 6, 1854. He had fought a losing battle however, and finally disposed of the business to his brother-in-law, George W. Hazelton.

In a letter, dated May 16, 1854, Still informed his mother of his reverses, stating that he had lost "over \$15,000 through the rascality of Burgess and Gilbert." He was forced to turn everything over to his creditors and announced his intention "to go through the Insolvency Laws." He added, too, that as soon as the steamer got in, he had sold his papers and made a few hun-

The Book Club of California

dred dollars, which he had given to his wife. With this money, she was to start a business in her own name—a business which her husband would manage.

In April 1854, in accordance with Still's plan, Mrs. Jane N. Still gave notice as "sole trader," stating her intention to conduct a book, newspaper, periodical, and stationery business. Shortly thereafter, she opened her store at the corner of Clay and Kearny. Like her husband, however, Mrs. Still liked an occasional change of scenery, and, in August of the same year, she moved the store to 155 Kearny Street. Her husband's business methods influenced her to such an extent that she even formed a partnership with an old Philadelphia friend, Charles S. Wood. This high point seems to have marked the end of Jane's career, for, in February 1855, John Still returned from his temporary eclipse and became a public figure again.

Still heralded his February return: "Still's in the field again," his fellow citizens being further informed that because he was too poor to have a store of his own, he had made arrangements to act as newspaper and magazine agent for Lord & Webb's Bookstore, corner Montgomery and Merchant Streets. Once in the field again, it was only to be expected that a man of his talents would soon be doing business at, or near, the same old stand. Sure enough, in June 1855, six years and ten locations after his initial venture in Pike Street, J. H. Still opened The New York Bookstore at 100 Kearny Street. Here, he advertised his determination to keep his reputation as the cheapest bookseller in California. Six months later, he moved again, to 88 Kearny Street, incorporating a new department, a branch post office, for the convenience of his patrons.

In 1856, he opened a branch bookstore at 120 Montgomery Street, became the first publisher of the San Francisco *News Letter*, which was established in July of that year, and achieved another move—this time, to 62 Kearny Street.

The remaining twenty years of his life were devoted to the book business and a quest for the ideal partner and location. New quarters were found and deserted for newer; partnerships were formed and dissolved with equal facility. During this period, on April 3, 1858, to be exact, he announced the forthcoming publication of *Still's New Monthly Magazine*, to be devoted to

Quarterly News Letter

literature, art, and mining operations. We have no record of the success of this unusual combination of subject matter, but it may be significant that, in 1859, John H. Still & Company were doing business at 113 Nassau Street, New York, as California Book-sellers and News Agents.



John Hamilton Still

He was back in San Francisco within a short time however, and his next venture was the *Californian's Guide and Register*, a semimonthly publication which first appeared in July 1860. This was more favorably received, according to the San Francisco *Daily Alta* of July 13, 1860, which commented, "Editorial and selected articles evince ability, industry, and discrimination." Still's interest in new addresses continued active nevertheless, and after several more changes of location, he went back to New York and established himself in business, remaining there until 1871.

Upon his return to San Francisco, he opened a store at 315 Kearny Street. In an advertisement published a few months later, he speaks of sickness "having almost used him up since his

The Book Club of California

return to his old stamping ground." Although he continued active in business during the next several years, his health grew steadily worse up to the time of his death, in the Summer of 1876. On July 17, John Hamilton Still, one of the earliest members of the Society of California Pioneers, was buried at the Port of Colon (formerly Aspinwall).

UCLA Special Collections

BY NEAL HARLOW*

THE UCLA LIBRARY with its three-quarter million volumes is but thirty years removed from its 1920 childhood of 60,000 books. Another and truer sign of growing maturity is the establishment, recently celebrated, of a Department of Special Collections to handle its expanding collections of manuscripts, rare books, and other unusual research materials. On July 28, with the completion of a remodeling project of a portion of the library building of the University of California at Los Angeles, a new separate reading room and storage stack for rare materials was dedicated, and an energetic program of acquisition, preservation, and use is in full swing.

George Harding, president of The Book Club of California, participated at UCLA in the July 28 dedication, discussing the place of rare books and manuscripts in a university library, with a panel of speakers including Henry R. Wagner, James T. Babb of Yale, John Walton Caughey, Majl Ewing, and Lawrence Clark Powell of UCLA.

The Department of Special Collections, now four years in the making, began as something more than an idea of setting apart rare books and manuscripts for preservation. It has shied away from an easy philosophy of restriction toward one of affording maximum use of unusual materials under careful supervision. A library's problem children—materials of awkward format or fragile physical condition, of large monetary value, unique or irreplaceable—are not ignored or simply banished from society, but are given treatment peculiar to their needs. By carefully

*Head of Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

Quarterly News-Letter

controlling the conditions under which they are stored and used, they are made available for teaching and research to a degree consistent with their physical condition and with university rules and regulations.

Manuscripts, rare books, maps, music, pamphlets, collections of California imprints or of historical and bibliographical interest, fine printing, illustrations, newspapers; film, disc, tape, and wire recordings; collections kept together because of a unity provided by subject or origin, archival material comprised of manuscripts, printed or mixed materials—these are examples of *special collections*.

For these materials the new department provides appropriate physical care, convenient facilities for use, an alert acquisition and processing program, various guides to the use of materials, and a staff competent in all the pertinent library techniques, plus subject specialization, research aptitude and experience, and a liking for public service.

The present staff includes a background of many years' professional experience in several of California's leading research libraries, degrees from three professional library schools, two doctorates of philosophy, antiquarian bookstore experience, and museum and fine arts training and experience. This competence and practice are well exploited in acquiring and conserving research material in order that the university faculty, students, writers, and a large nonuniversity public may be served now and in the future.

Facilities provided in the new UCLA department include storage with restricted access and controlled conditions of temperature and humidity, ample and proper facilities to house manuscripts and rare materials, comfortable and convenient study facilities, provision for acquiring and administering individual collections as integral units; special equipment for the use of maps, microfilm, and microcards; typewriters, recording and playing equipment for voice and music, a complete photographic service, card catalogs and guides, and other technical and administrative aids.

Many years of expeditious collecting and building under the present and previous chief librarians have made an impressive beginning in acquiring significant research resources. Of Cali-

The Book Club of California

ifornia historical manuscripts, the Robert E. Cowan, Margaret Gaffey Kilroy, Archibald H. Gillespie, and John P. Jones collections are examples. A recently acquired group of southern United States manuscripts and Civil War material provides resources in this area. Outstanding among literary manuscripts are the recently announced Franz Werfel Archive, and a long list of manuscripts of twentieth century authors. To the original Cowan library of California printed material have been added hundreds of items in and out of Cowan's bibliography, including several hundred volumes from the late George Lyman's library. The Dawson Archive, containing the records of Los Angeles' oldest antiquarian bookstore, supported by the Ernest Dawson Memorial Fund for materials in bibliography and books-about-books, is an important bibliographical contribution. A special collection of many thousands of California imprints, particularly rich in the output of Southern California presses, is a cultural treasure; and collections of pamphlets and other sources illustrating the economic, political, religious, educational, and general cultural development of the region is of immense value as a local archive. A historical collection of children's books, centered in the Olive Percival collection, is of special interest. Maps, to a total of some 25,000, general and local in coverage, have been acquired within two or three years. A music library of scores and parts for performance, with facilities for publishing music manuscripts photographically, contains some 8,000 compositions for chamber and symphonic orchestras, used regularly by several score organizations in the West. A photographic laboratory serving the university campuses and educational and research institutions throughout the country provides microfilm, still photography, photostats, ozalid copies, color work, and prints and enlargements of all kinds.

These samples of the UCLA Library's special collections hardly suggest the breadth of the library's wide interests, which range through literature, the humanities, arts, the sciences and social sciences, and into the many professional fields of law, medicine, business, journalism, education, and theater arts. Teaching and research thrive upon a variety of library materials, upon special collections and general materials, rare books and commonplace items, manuscripts, typescripts, prints, newspapers, film, tape,

Quarterly News-Letter

and many other forms of human expression. The UCLA Library is equipped to handle all of the voluminous and variform records required for teaching and research and, in its Department of Special Collections, to care appropriately and sensitively for those sparse, prized, diverse, unusual, but useful library materials which are the crowning glory of a great library anywhere.

The William Doxey Book Shop

Another Chapter

BY FLODDEN W. HERON*

THE VERY INTERESTING ARTICLE by Robert O'Brien in a recent issue of the *News-Letter* omits the intimate touch of the early Doxey book shop on the Market Street side of the Palace Hotel. Book-collectors and old-timers give but a hazy view of it. The following article reveals that Doxey was an ardent Stevensonian, possessing material that is almost priceless today. A copy of *Silverado Squatters* brought \$2300 at auction in London; we may ponder where is now located the presentation copy offered for sale by Doxey, and mentioned in the following story written for the *London Sketch* by Emily Soldene in 1895, eight months after Stevenson's death.

"On August 13th last, strolling down Market Street, San Francisco, looking into the curio and other shops under the Palace Hotel, my attention was attracted by a crowd of people around one particular store window. Now, a crowd in San Francisco (except on political occasions) is an uncommon sight. Naturally, with the curiosity of my sex and the perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon, I took my place in the surging mass and patiently waited till the course of events brought me up close to the point of vantage. What came they out for to see? It was a bookseller's window. In the window was a shrine. 'The Works and Portraits of Robert Louis Stevenson,' proclaimed a placard all illuminated and embossed with red and purple and green and gold. In the

*Flodden W. Heron, an honorary officer of the Club, is a noted collector of and authority on Stevenson.

The Book Club of California

center of the display was an odd-looking document. This, then was the loadstone—a letter of Stevenson's. Many people stood and read, then turned away, sad and sorrowful looking. When you have read, you will not wonder at the tears:

I think now, this 5th or 6th of April, 1873, that I can see my future life. I think it will run stiller and stiller year by year, a very quiet, desultorily studious existence. If God only gives me tolerable health, I think now I shall be very happy: work and science calm the mind, and stop gnawing in the brain; and as I am glad to say that I do now recognize that I shall never be a great man, I may set myself peacefully on a small journey, not without hope of coming to the inn before nightfall.

O dass mein leben
Nach diesem ziel ein ewig wandeln sey!

“Next day, I went to see Mr. Doxey himself. He is a Stevenson enthusiast and has one window (the window of the crowd) devoted entirely to Stevenson. All his works, all his editions—including the Edinburgh edition—are there; and he, with the greatest kindness, showed me the treasures he had collected. In the first place, the number of portraits was astonishing. Years and conditions and circumstances, all various and changing; but the face—the face always the same. The eyes, wonderful in their keenness, their interrogative, questioning, eager gaze; the looking out, always looking out, always asking, looking ahead, far away into some distant land not given to *les autres* to perceive. Mr. Doxey had pictures of him in every possible phase—in turndown collar, in no collar at all; his hair long, short and middling; in oils, in water color, in photos, in a smoking cap and imperial; with and without a moustache; young, youthful, dashing, Byronic; not so youthful, middle-aged; looking in this like a modern Manfred; in that, like an epitome of the fashions, wearing a debonair demeanor and a degage tie; as a boy, as a barrister; on horseback, in a boat. There was a portrait taken by Mrs. Stevenson in 1885, and one lent by Virgy Williams. Again, he was photographed in his home at Samoa, surrounded by his friends and his faithful, devoted band of young men, his Samoan followers; in the Royal boathouse at Honolulu, seated side by side with His Majesty King Kalakaua; on board the *Casco*. Then, the later one at Vailima; later still, writing in his bed. Coming to the ‘inn’ he talked about in 1873—coming so close, close,

Quarterly News-Letter

unexpectedly, but not unprepared—Robert Louis Stevenson has passed the veil.

“On the fly-leaf of the copy of the *Silverado Squatters*, sent to Virgil Williams and Dora Norton Williams, to whom it was dedicated, is the following poem in the handwriting of the author, written at Hyeres, where, as he says in his diary, he spent the happiest days of his life:

Here, from the forelands of the tideless sea,
Behold and take my offering unadorned.
In the Pacific air it sprang; it grew
Among the silence of the Alpine air;
In Scottish heather blossomed; and at last,
By that unshapen sapphire, in whose face
Spain, Italy, France, Algiers, and Tunis view
Their introverted mountains, came to fruit.
Back now, my booklet, on the diving ship,
And posting on the rails to home, return
Home, and the friends whose honoring name you bear.”

Reading in the Gold Rush

BY GERARD HURLEY*

THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD brought all kinds of people to California; among others, it attracted a rush of men and women who were readers. Many pioneers came from areas where public schooling and bookstores had made reading an established diversion. In a short time, California had a large reading public, but a shortage of books. The demand for books could not be quickly or easily satisfied, for California was isolated and to obtain a book from a New York dealer often entailed a wait of several months. The ways in which enterprising readers and book dealers met this demand produced a book boom unique in Nineteenth Century America.

Although space in prairie wagons was precious, some California pioneers packed books with them on the westward trek. However, fewer books finished the trip than began it, for libraries

*Gerard Hurley is a graduate student at the University of California and a teaching assistant in its Department of English.

The Book Club of California

were frequently jettisoned with other cargo when loads had to be lightened. Nor were many books available for the Forty-Niner when he arrived in the West. Of course, there had been books in California before the Gold Rush, but the libraries of the missions and of Spanish families, mostly imported from Mexico City, were generally not in English and not on subjects interesting to the Yankees. A few suitable texts were to be found, as Dana had discovered at San Diego in 1835; and some of the 168 volumes of Harper's Family Library sold during 1847 by Sam Brannan in San Francisco probably filtered down to pioneer miners. But it was not until after 1849 that there were enough books on hand to meet the demand occasioned by the influx of literate pioneers.

Readers of the Gold Rush managed to get books even before dealers opened shop on the new frontier. Second-hand books were traded from reader to reader or bought and sold. The libraries of the ships abandoned in the bay of San Francisco were also sold, probably by the very crews who jumped ship to rush to the gold fields. Attention was generally called to any supply of books, however small. In 1849, *The Pacific News*, for instance, mentioned an unclaimed packing case, valuable because it contained some books. In the same year, *The Daily Alta* advertised:

Books! Books! For sale at this office - - - A choice assortment of beautifully bound American books; comprising souvenirs, gifts, clasp Bibles, historical, moral and religious works, and a variety of reading adapted to the capacity of youth.

Such makeshift methods of distribution were not necessary for long. By December 1849, Wilson and Spaulding, apparently the earliest bookstore in San Francisco, was in business. *The Pacific News* described the beginning of this concern:

Commencing with a few books on a stand in the open air, Messrs. Wilson and Spaulding have gradually increased their stock, fitted up a pleasant little store on Clay Street, opposite the police office, and established themselves there . . . We know of no place where an idle half hour, if such a thing is possible in California, can be spent more agreeably than in the midst of their shelves.

By the end of 1851, San Franciscans had been served by thirteen different bookstores, although never more than five or six of these were in business at the same time. Many stores remained

Quarterly News-Letter

open only a short while, then closed or joined with a larger concern. Although the demand for books was great, the book business was risky and the market was frequently unpredictable. In the six months required for a dealer to order and receive a shipment from the East Coast, the demand for a special book might be satisfied by a competitor with a previously placed order. Dealers were often caught with excess supplies, and auctions of large stocks of books and unclaimed shipments were common.

Nevertheless, books were valuable merchandise and were advertised as such in the San Francisco newspapers. Early in the Gold Rush, for example, "a family library" was offered for sale along with wheelbarrows and barrels of beans, while "1500 volumes" were advertised with Mexican playing cards, accordions, paintings, and window shades. Later in the decade, a job-lot of novels was listed for auction along with some of Lola Montez' diamonds; and a cartload of pure Havana cigars shared the block with 200 copies of Volume Two of Thomas Hart Benton's *Thirty Year View*. This incomplete stock of Senator Benton's memoirs suggests that perhaps publishers dumped remainders on the California market, where the reading public would have to accept what it could get, and where almost any book new to the frontier could probably be sold.

The selling price of a book was not important in California. The demand was acute and money was plentiful. "Cheap literature," that is, paper-backed books, was sold, but so were lavishly bound texts. In 1850, for instance, a San Francisco dealer confidently displayed a two-volume set of Macaulay priced at \$32.00. Since cost was an unimportant item in appealing to the public, dealers stressed the quantity and variety of their stocks. Less than a year after Wilson and Spaulding began business with a sidewalk stand, the successful firm stocked over 50,000 volumes and constantly bought second-hand books to augment its supply. Other dealers advertised single incoming shipments of 5,000 books or hawked "10,000 new books by the cartload." One dealer admitted he did not have the biggest stock in San Francisco, but claimed he possessed the greatest variety, for what he lacked, he simply bought from his competitors.

The demand for books grew with the population and it was probably augmented by the several great fires which swept San

The Book Club of California

Francisco between 1849 and 1851. The main booksellers seemed to escape each conflagration with their stocks intact, for immediately after each fire, dealers advertised the same titles which they had been selling during the previous weeks.

Advertisements in the San Francisco newspapers provide an index to books available in California during the Gold Rush, for dealers listed the titles of as many books as possible. The *Bible*, of course, was constantly advertised even though it was the one book commonly brought West by pioneers or provided freely by local religious organizations. The classics and standard works of reference, religion, literature, history, and travel were on sale early in the Gold Rush. Dame Shirley probably brought her library from the East but she could have duplicated it in San Francisco stores which stocked her favorites: the works of Shakespeare, Spenser, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Burns, Lowell's *Fable for Critics*, and Walton's *Compleat Angler*.

Book advertisements listed the works of classical writers—Homer, Virgil, Xenophon, Plutarch, Tacitus, Herodotus, Josephus—as well as those of the great figures in English literature: Chaucer, Milton, Bunyan, Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Addison and Steele, Hume, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats, and Browning. The Gold Rush reader could buy works by Dante, Tasso, Froissart, Schiller, and Goethe, as well as the writings of Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Daniel Webster.

Californians could not only buy books by the great authors of the past and present but they could also get works on the subjects of popular interest along the eastern seaboard of the 1850s. These subjects included spiritualism, phrenology, Gothic architecture, Cuba, the Catholic Church, new medical discoveries; the Hungarian patriot, Kossuth; slavery, temperance, and the reform spirit in general. In addition, Californians singled out books which dealt with the State's history or geographical position; and they read about Mexico, Spain, Nicaragua's proposed interoceanic canal, and the Sandwich Islands. Books about California itself were especially popular. Two travel accounts, Bayard Taylor's *El Dorado* and Alonzo Delano's *Across the Plains*, were advertised and commented on in newspaper editorials. *The Resources, Policy, and Destiny of California*, a series of articles re-

Quarterly News-Letter

printed from *The Daily Alta* and *The Annals of San Francisco*, the city's first formal history, were widely circulated in the State. Books by local authors, such as Yellow Bird's *Life of Murietta* and Delano's humorous writings, *Old Block's Sketch Book*, and *Chips from the Old Block*, were well received, but Californians were interested in the entire West and they also bought Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, Bonner's *Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*, and James Hall's *Legends of the West*.

On the whole, however, the literary tastes of the Gold Rush Californian were similar to those of the average American reader of that time. The most popular reading in California, as well as in the nation as a whole, was novels. The pioneer's tastes had been acquired before coming West. Along with the rest of middle-class, republican Americans, he read novels about European nobility and adventure in aristocratic circles. Although a democrat, the pioneer still read of society intrigue and life in the *haut monde*. As a citizen of a nation of growing cities, he was interested in accounts of urban slum life and crime in the underworld. Women comprised the major portion of the reading public in America, if not in California, and the California reader had to be content with sentimental novels about women, and frequently by women. Books slanted for the American Protestant who was especially concerned with the growing Catholic population, found an interested audience in California with its Spanish Catholic culture and heritage. Slavery was a burning issue throughout the nation, and the California reader read many novels debating the problem.

Novel reading was universal in California, both in the cities and in the mines. San Francisco book dealers advertised novels by the tens of thousands, while advertisements carried the names of some of the most popular authors: Bulwer, Cooper, Dumas, G. P. R. James, G. W. M. Reynolds, Lever, Lover, Jerrold, Dickens, Sue, Mrs. Gore, T. S. Arthur, Emerson Bennett, Marryat, Ainsworth, Ned Buntline, Newton Curtis. . . . Newspaper writers took their reader's knowledge of novels for granted. One newspaper compared an attempted suicide in a San Francisco brothel to a scene in a novel by Eugene Sue. An article about the South Seas mentions Melville's descriptions in *Typee*. A paragraph on drunkenness alludes to Marryat's *Jacob Faithful*. G. P. R.

The Book Club of California

James' application for American citizenship was treated as important news in the San Francisco press. Hinton Helper, a reporter of the Gold Rush, described the yellow-backed novels he found in a miner's tent, books whose "soiled and dogeared leaves give evidence that they are not allowed to go unread." Prentice Mulford recalled how his mining friends purchased a library in San Francisco, took it to the mines, and replenished it from time to time with magazines, scientific works, and novels.

Early Californians possessed a sense of humor about their overwhelming taste for novels. Thackeray's parodies of Cooper, Disraeli, Lever, Bulwer, Mrs. Gore, and G. P. R. James—all novelists popular in California in the Gold Rush decade—were advertised in San Francisco and favorably commented upon in the local press. Bret Harte's *Condensed Novels*, written in the 1860s, parodied the authors popular during the Gold Rush—Charlotte Brontë, Dumas, Marryat, T. S. Arthur, female novelists in general, and authors of southern novels, among others—and was even more successful with California readers than Thackeray's parodies had been.

Californians also read novels in magazine form. One of the leading magazines devoted to the reprinting of popular fiction, *Harper's Monthly*, had more subscribers per capita in California than in any other state. When subscription libraries were established in the middle of the Gold Rush decade, they, too, catered to the pioneer's taste for novels. The largest of them, the Mercantile Library of San Francisco, soon found that its collection of fiction was "entirely inadequate to the demands of the readers" and by 1857 it was ordering two copies of all new novels. Even though fiction comprised but seventeen per cent of the Mercantile Library's collection in 1858, it accounted for more than half of the yearly circulation.

During the decade following the discovery of gold, the book business was almost as active and as fantastic as the business of mining. The sudden influx of a population accustomed to books, the initial shortage of reading matter, and the inflated economy resulted in the importation of immense quantities of books which were hawked and marketed with gusto. As the Gold Rush boom lessened, and life in California became more routine and settled, the book market tended to assume the methods and manners

Quarterly News-Letter

established in older areas. For almost ten years, however, California's book business had been characterized by the same frenzied atmosphere which marked the mining of gold itself.

News of Club Publications

MULEBACK TO THE CONVENTION

The letters of J. Ross Browne, will be published by the Club on September 9 in commemoration of California's admission to statehood. In the hitherto-unpublished letters, Browne describes his journey south from San Francisco and his sojourn at Monterey during the sessions of the Constitutional Convention. The book will be illustrated by several original drawings made by Browne, by his portrait, and by a facsimile of one of his letters.

Members will shortly receive an announcement and order card for this, the Club's next publication, which is being designed by the Black Vine Press.

CHRISTMAS BOOK OF 1950

Plans have been made for a handsome Christmas book—*The Maps of San Francisco Bay* edited by Neal Harlow. A detailed description of content, format, and design will appear in the next number of the *News-Letter*. Suffice to state here that some twenty maps will be reproduced and that the book is being printed at The Grabhorn Press.

Gifts to the Library

A FIFTEEN-INCH PAPER CUTTER and fifty transparent folders for filing interesting letters and documents are included among the recent gifts in addition to books and ephemera. Received since the last issue of the *News-Letter* are:

Fifteen-inch paper cutter. *Gift of* FRANK SCHWABACHER.

Fifty transparent file folders. *Gift of* EDWARD HERRILL.

A Dangerous Journey, J. Ross Browne; *Babushka, a Russian Legend*, Edith M. Thomas. [Imprints of the Arthur Lites Press.] *Gift of* ARTHUR LITES.

Two Captains West, Albert and Jane Salisbury. *Gift of* CONSTANCE SPENCER and THE SUPERIOR PUBLISHING COMPANY.

The History of Tom Thumb; Puss in Boots. [Helen Gentry imprints.] *Gift of* MRS. ELEANOR L. GOODING.

Oregon Imprints 1847-1870, Douglas C. McMurtie. *Gift of* WORTH SEYMOUR.

Beasts of the Tar Pits, W. W. Robinson; *Minor Poets*, Francis Thompson; *Double Shadow*, Ross Worsley. [The Ward Ritchie Press imprints.] *Gift of* MRS. GREGG ANDERSON and WARD RITCHIE.

Five catalogs of former *Western Books* exhibits. *Gift of* H. RICHARD ARCHER.

The Story of Clipper Cards, Allan Forbes. *Gift of* ALLAN FORBES and AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

From Private Collection to Public Institution: The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Lawrence Clark Powell; *The Pleasures of Study*, Robert Burton. *Gift of* LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL.

The Book Club of California

Elected to Membership

The following have been elected to membership since the Summer issue of the *News-Letter*:

MEMBER	ADDRESS	SPONSOR
Merle Armitage	New York City, New York	P. K. Thomajan
Mrs. Marjorie D. Bell	Oakland	Mrs. Roland P. Chessé
Mrs. E. L. Bowes	San Francisco	Miss Margaret P. Tinning
Henry M. Bowles	San Francisco	Dr. Albert Shumate
Miss Louise A. Boyd	San Rafael	Mrs. John I. Walter
Clifford E. Crowder	Benicia	Mrs. John I. Walter
Osborn M. Curtis, Jr.	Everett, Washington	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
Grant Dahlstrom	Pasadena	H. Richard Archer
Jack N. Ewing	Willows	V. Vodrazka
H. G. Fairman	Pasadena	Charles Yale
Dr. T. Christie Innes	San Francisco	Flodden W. Heron
Miss Theoda Johnson	San Francisco	Mrs. Roland P. Chessé
Warren F. Lewis	Los Angeles	Robert J. Woods
J. Francis McComas	Berkeley	Roby Wentz
Mrs. LeNoir Miller	Benicia	Mrs. John I. Walter
Frank Perls	Los Angeles	Mrs. John I. Walter
Dr. Arthur L. Rogers	Portland, Oregon	David Magee
Henry Sinton	San Francisco	Mrs. John I. Walter
John K. Standish	Vancouver, Washington	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
Sam Bell Wakefield	San Francisco	Miss Catherine Harroun
Mrs. J. H. Yount	Altadena	Glen Dawson
Amer. Antiquarian Society	Worcester, Massachusetts	George L. Harding

As long as the supply lasts, new members receive all parts of the current Keepsake series, *Bonanza Banquets*. Last year's Keepsakes may be purchased at \$6.00 for the series of twelve. There are twenty-three sets available.

Vacation Notice

THIS YEAR the Club's annual vacation period will take place during the final two weeks of September, and the office will therefore be closed from September 16 to October 3.

Exhibition Note

THE LAST TWO EXHIBITS of the current fiscal year will be the Eric Gill show beginning August 5 and a conclusive exhibition of the printing of the Colt Press beginning Saturday, September 2. In the Eric Gill show, the Club will attempt to include as comprehensive an exhibit of the works of this great many-sided artist. This will include his work with type, stone engraving and sculpture, lettering, wood and copper engraving, some of his writings, and his contributions to the art of the book. The Colt Press show will be the first complete show ever given this noteworthy Western printer-publisher. As in the past, the Club rooms will be open on Saturdays for the convenience of out of town members and their guests.

Miscellany

Portfolio, "a new type of Graphic Arts Magazine" is a noble attempt to bring to America a lush, expensively produced quarterly journal to compete with

Quarterly News-Letter

the great European magazines like the pre-war German *Gebrauchsgraphik*, the French *Arts et Metiers Graphiques*, and the comparatively new Swiss *Graphis*. It is published and edited by two bright young men and much of their promise in their first prospectus has been kept. The article on E. McKnight Kauffer, poster artist extraordinary, book illustrator and painter, is superb. Much of the presentation is too flamboyant—but nonetheless exciting. In fact, the entire magazine has the air of excitement.

But when the editors pick upon that great 18th Century type designer Giambattista Bodoni to write an appreciation, they become too romantic. They are either completely misinformed, did too little research, or ignored the opinions of authorities to justify their own deductions. The only excuse for the article in this journal is to explain the "Italian genius who created America's most widely used typeface." This is a genuine enough reason but when the editors (he or they, the article is not signed) pass over quickly the influence of Didot as a "foe" who had nothing whatsoever to do with the ultimate Bodoni types, then other glaring errors must be apparent. And they are.

The editors ignore the great English master Baskerville whose chaste and simple type concept and wide margins preceded those made famous by Bodoni (in this article) by many years. Our Bodoni today derives almost as much from Didot as it does from Bodoni.

The *Portfolio* editors also make too little of the influence of the great French type founder and designer Fournier—the original master of Bodoni. Some of the early books of Bodoni imitate Fournier to such a degree that amateurs are fooled by the copied type, the ornament and the design.

And lastly, the editors have made the astounding error of ascribing Bodoni to a modern book jacket (that is obviously set in Garamond) in their review on contemporary Bodoni uses.

Portfolio # 2 was two months late due to an unprecedented demand for the first issue which saw, probably for the first time, a magazine publisher re-printing his first issue to meet demand!

2, just out, is as gay and as flamboyant as # 1, but it lacks the primary printing feature that made the first issue so provocative. It contains, however, a good, but one-sided argument on the merits of the Vari-Typer as an instrument to replace the linotype; a most interesting review of modern wall papers; a much too short exhibition of typographic playing—attempts at "plastic invention" with type. These are only three of ten articles and not particularly the most interesting. The obvious expense in production and the sheer prettiness of *Portfolio's* format more than justifies the "advance" subscription price. The publisher is still allowing the "introductory rate" of ten dollars a year for four copies (regular rate, twelve dollars). *Portfolio*, 22 East 12th Street, Cincinnati 10, Ohio.

TO THE Society of Calligraphers of Los Angeles, Arnold Bank, noted typographer and calligrapher, last month presented an important demonstration of practical calligraphy, showing its relation to type and its usage in today's printing. Mr. Bank's demonstration and explanation of letter forms, their history and treatment, were of great interest to the ever-growing number who

The Book Club of California

study art and lettering, who work with type, or who are now indulging in calligraphy as a hobby.

A Dangerous Journey by J. Ross Browne, the first book from The Arthur Lites Press of Palo Alto, is receiving high critical approval, both as an important Californiana item and as an attractive product of this new Bay Region private press. The text embraces Browne's intrepid trip in 1849 from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo and is embellished by his own drawings which are reproduced in color. The price is \$5.00, and the edition is limited to 1,000 copies.

A MANUSCRIPT of the first three numbers of *The Sunbeam Magazine* of 1866, edited by Robert Louis Stevenson entirely in his own handwriting and illustrated by him, was sold recently for \$1000 at Sotheby's, London. These numbers, purchased by Messrs. Quaritch, were written while Stevenson was a student at day school at Edinburgh and it is unlikely that more than one copy of each number was made.

TODAY, noteworthy products from the handpress are unfortunately scarce. Attention is therefore merited by the latest book (three years in the making) from Victor Hammer's private press, Stamperia del Santuccio, 201 North Mill Street, Lexington, Kentucky. For almost twenty years, Mr. Hammer has been printing books in the tradition of Old World craftsmen: first at Florence, Italy; then at Vienna; for nine years at Wells College, in Aurora, New York, where he founded the Wells College Press; and finally, New York City and Lexington.

*Whatever your collecting interests, you will
enjoy browsing through our tremendous stock
of new, rare, and out-of-print books.*

CATALOGUES ISSUED : CORRESPONDENCE INVITED

WESTERN AMERICANA

The Holmes Book Company

ESTABLISHED 1894

274 - 14th Street, Oakland 4. Phone TWinoaks 3-6860

Quarterly News-Letter

The present book, the poems of Johann Hölderlin, was hand set in Uncial type, printed on handmade Italian paper in an edition of fifty-one copies; it measures 13 x 9 inches and consists of 260 pages. The price is \$100 per copy. A brochure giving further details may be had from the press.

THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY at Worcester, Massachusetts, have published an informative paper-bound booklet, *The Story of Clipper Ship Sailing Cards*, by Allan Forbes. It is, of course, of special interest to Book Club members, as it develops and refers to the highly successful 1949 Keepsakes, *California Clipper Cards*. The booklet just published reproduces ten of these handsomely lithographed sailing cards which were used to advertise the impending sailings of these clippers to San Francisco.

Sacramento Illustrated, handsomely printed by Grant Dahlstrom at the Castle Press, and with an important foreword by Caroline Wenzel, is now available at the publishers: Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 3183 Carly Way, Sacramento 16. Price \$15.00.

A Statistical Survey of California Centennial Publishing, compiled by Donald P. Bean, director of Stanford University Press, reveals that a total of 378 titles was published from January 1, 1946, through December 31, 1949. This total was divided almost equally between California and Eastern publishers, although the former was responsible for only 808,348 copies as against 2,740,272 copies for the latter, with a grand total of 3,548,620 yielding sales revenues of

CALIFORNIA LOCAL HISTORY

A CENTENNIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edited by Ethel Blumann and Mabel W. Thomas

Ninety libraries contributed more than 5,000 entries to this extensive, subdivided bibliography, indexed so that a wealth of historical information on counties and smaller localities becomes readily available. Compiled by the California Library Association Committee on Local History. 576 pages, 7x10 inches. \$10.00

THREE YEARS IN CALIFORNIA

BY WALTER COLTON

Edited by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur

A California Classic. "No such rounded picture of California life of the period is available in any other book, and Colton's style is a delight." — *San Francisco News*.

Illustrated \$5.00

AT YOUR BOOKSTORE

Stanford University Press

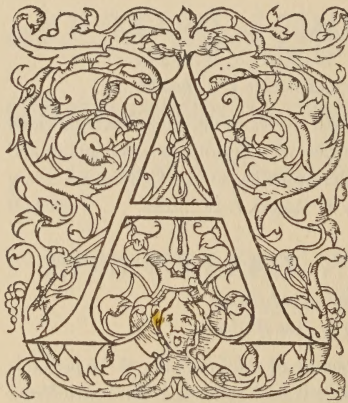
The Book Club of California

\$6,048,503. As Centennial books continue to roll off the presses, it is obvious that the demand for Californiana is yet to be satiated and gives mute testimony to the assimilating proclivities of such collectors and readers. Although Mr. Bean does not so indicate, perhaps there is some sort of correlation between the great advance in this State's population, and the gargantuan appetite for books on historic California.

CLUB MEMBER P. K. Thomajan of the Profile Press (151 West 25th Street, New York) announces publication of *Came the Dawn*, "a veritable treasure chest of rare humor buried in the forgotten files that contain the silent cinema's subtitles." The book is designed in a clever combination of modern and period atmosphere, and appropriately bound in red plush. The price, \$3.25 until September 30, then \$3.75.

JUST PUBLISHED by Grahame Hardy is *Legends of the Comstock Lode*, an anthology of the most arresting and dramatic historical aspects of Virginia City and environs during the silver bonanza years. The compilation was arranged by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg. Price \$3.00.

LAWRENCE POWELL's paper "Recollections of an Ex-Bookseller" issued to celebrate Jake Zeitlin's moving to the Red Barn, (Los Angeles) has been printed in a handsome booklet by Saul & Lillian Marks at their Plantin Press.



ASK YOUR FRIENDS

and they'll tell you of the fine buys they've made in our shop time and time again. The stock is overflowing with new items just in from our European trip. Why not send for Catalogue 73 now in preparation? Rare books, first editions, fine presses, famous imprints, and material of typographic and graphic arts interest.

CHISWICK BOOK SHOP

2 EAST 46TH STREET NEW YORK 17, N. Y.